

# Child and Family Services Update

February 3, 2003

---

## Random Moment Sample Process

*By Cosette Mills*

### **Introduction**

Child and Family Services receives funding from Federal and State funds. A process must be in place to determine what portion of the agency's work qualifies for Federal funding to help pay for staff salaries, benefits and administrative costs.

The Random Moment Sample (RMS) process was established for this purpose. Through the RMS, caseworkers and their supervisors participate in a random sample process in which work activities are reported for specific points in time or "moments." When all of the sampled "moments" are compiled for a month, Child and Family Services has a statistically valid "snapshot" of how caseworkers and caseworker supervisors in the agency spent their time. This data is then used, in conjunction with client eligibility data, to determine how much Federal funding Child and Family Services may claim.

Caseworker and supervisor participation is very important in the RMS process. Complete, accurate and timely reporting is essential.

### **Sample Selection Process**

Each month, a computer program generates an RMS sample list, drawn from all potential caseworkers and supervisors (from human resource data) and all potential moments in a month (in 10-minute increments). The program randomly pairs a caseworker or supervisor with a given moment during the month. A single worker or specific "moment" may be selected from the monthly sample multiple times. For Child and Family Services, at least 700 RMS contacts have to be selected each month, with at least 2000 valid contacts quarterly.

### **Random Moment Sample Process**

Office of Administrative Support (OAS) staff administer the RMS process for Child and Family Services. Staff from that office are responsible to request a response for each worker/moment selected by the computer for each month and to enter the results in a computer database. OAS staff send e-mail requests for an RMS response at the precise "moment" for the sample using advance-send features in e-mail. A reply is requested within 24 hours. Follow-up contacts from OAS to Child and Family Services sampled workers or their supervisors may be made by e-mail or phone.

If the worker is at the computer when the RMS response is received, a response should be sent immediately. If the worker is away from the desk, a response should be given as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours. If a worker has questions about how to respond, a phone number is also provided for the response.

# Child and Family Services Update

February 3, 2003

---

Caseworkers and supervisors are responsible to report what they were doing at the time of the scheduled RMS contact (not at the time they actually opened the e-mail or phone message). The report is submitted as an e-mail reply or may be reported by phone. The report consists of three parts:

- First, the sampled worker must report if a client-specific activity was being performed at the time of the RMS contact. If yes, the client's name and case number must be included.
- Second, the sampled worker must report the program area work was relevant to at the time of the call. Program areas to be reported include: child protective services, home-based/in-home services, domestic violence, adoption and foster care. A worker may also indicate that no specific program area is being worked in if the activity was not client or program-specific.
- Third, the sampled worker must briefly describe the specific type of activity being performed at the time specified for the RMS. The code for the activity can also be reported. For example, the worker might report conducting a family assessment, developing a case plan, attending court or placing a child, if involved in client-specific activity. If the worker is not involved with a client-specific activity, the reported activity might include attending staff meeting or training, being on vacation or performing administration tasks such as filing or completing a time sheet. (See complete definitions and code number of specific activities for the RMS process, attached.)

Complete responses to RMS requests will save both Child and Family Services staff and OAS staff time. Staff from OAS will follow-up with a worker if additional clarification is needed to a response from a worker.

*Note: Attached is a form and description of terms that help clarify how to report. The form does not actually have to be filled out and filed because the information is recorded and immediately entered into a database, but must be accurately reported through email or by phone.*

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

- 1. Why does Child and Family Services have to bother with the RMS process?** In order to claim Federal funds for administrative purposes, Child and Family Services must use a statistically valid method to identify costs that can be claimed. If Child and Family Services isn't utilizing the RMS process to get a "snapshot" of worker activities during the month, another method must be implemented, such as keeping daily time sheets specifying all activities in 15-minute increments.
- 2. How does the process work?** Caseworkers are notified by email by DHS staff in the OAS that they are being sampled at a specific date and time. Specific questions are asked to help workers know how to respond. OAS staff enter codes for worker activities into a database based upon the written or verbal response of the worker.

# Child and Family Services Update

February 3, 2003

---

- 3. What must be included in the RMS response?** First, the sampled worker must report if a client-specific activity was being performed at the time of the RMS contact. If yes, the client's name and case number must be included.

Second, the sampled worker must report the program area work was relevant to at the time of the call. Program areas to be reported include: child protective services, home-based/in-home services, domestic violence, adoption and foster care. A worker may also indicate that no specific program area is being worked in if the activity was not client or program specific.

Third, the sampled worker must briefly describe the specific type of activity being performed at the time specified for the RMS. The code for the activity can also be reported. For example, the worker might report conducting a family assessment, developing a case plan, attending court or placing a child, if involved in client-specific activity. If the worker is not involved with a client-specific activity, the reported activity might include attending staff meeting or training, being on vacation or performing administration tasks such as filing or completing a time sheet.

- 4. What is the responsibility of the persons receiving the RMS contact?** It is critical that Child and Family Services workers accurately report their work activity at the appointed time for the RMS call. If the worker cannot be reached in person at the time of the contact, the Child and Family Services worker is responsible to respond within 24 hours to the RMS staff (unless the Child and Family Services worker is not working during that period or is at a location from which a response is not reasonably expected, such as an out-of-state conference). Response may be by email or phone. The phone number to respond to an RMS call is (801) 538-4256.
- 5. What kind of documentation is required by Child and Family Services staff?** Child and Family Services staff may want to document the RMS call in a personal phone log, if one is maintained. There is no requirement to document the RMS call in the client case record (hard copy or on SAFE). Primary documentation is maintained by the OAS in a database.
- 6. Why do I get multiple contacts each month, sometimes more than one in a day or week?** It's just the way the sample comes out of the computer. All caseworker and supervisor names are included in the pool of potential contacts in a month. The name remains in the sample even if selected for another contact "moment." Although this can be irritating, it's significantly better than having to do 100% reporting of activities on a time sheet on a regular basis.
- 7. Who receives RMS contacts?** Caseworkers and their supervisors, and domestic violence staff will receive email contacts through the RMS process.

# **Child and Family Services Update**

February 3, 2003

---

If you have questions about the RMS process, please email or call Cosette Mills, Child and Family Services State Office, at (801) 538-4058.